

Dangerous Road

A Letter of Complaint

Aims: To encourage the use of phrases which express attitude and emotion in a factual letter.

Time: One hour, with extended language work and homework.

Target Language: Phrases which express attitude and emotion
Phrases of place and direction
Collocations connected to road safety

Materials: Warm up exercise (diagram from *Dangerous Road* – see Lesson Step 1)
Dangerous Road
Jumbled Letter
Language Analysis
Language Extension
Writing Practice
Answer Key

Teacher's Notes and Lesson Steps:

1. As a warm up exercise, start the lesson with one student describing the **diagram** on *Dangerous Road* and their partner trying to draw it. (Fold the handout over so you can't see the vocabulary exercise). This is a fun start, which will aid comprehension in Step 4. Alternatively, describe the diagram yourself for all to draw. Check for differences.

2. Hand out *Dangerous Road* and complete the vocabulary exercise.

3. Explain that all the phrases come from a letter. Ask students in pairs to decide who wrote the letter, to whom and about what.

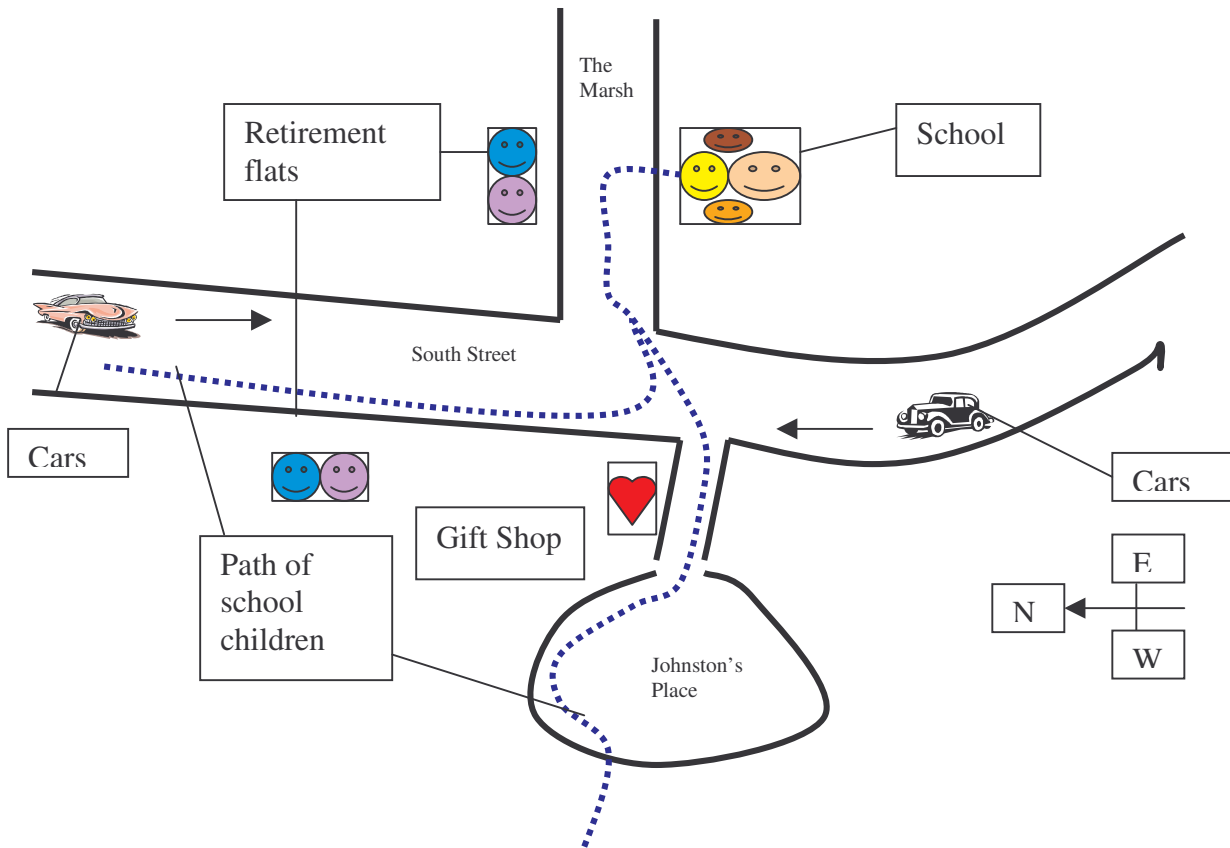
(A mother of two small children, to the Road and Safety Department of the Local Council, complaining about a dangerous stretch of road, near where she lives.)

4. Hand out the *Jumbled Letter* and allow time to fill in the gaps with the vocabulary from Step 2. Monitor and, when individuals are ready, hand out *Language Analysis* (the first instruction being to order the sentences).

Monitor and check as they work through it. Students may want to pair up to compare answers as they finish.

5. The *Language Extension* exercise is optional and can be done individually, or, to change the pace, as a class. Make it into a game by providing teams with counters to place in the right 'emotion box' for each phrase, as they are revealed on an OHP/read out (keep the counter for correct answers etc.).
6. Consolidate Step 5 by completing the sentences with the correct phrase.
7. Hand out *Writing Practice* for homework.

Diagram: Dangerous Road



Match words from each column to make a phrase related to road safety.

swift
stretch
40 to 60
zebra
poor
number
flow
narrow
serious
volume of
car —
speed
traffic
nearby

crossing
pavements
limit
traffic
risk
amenities
action
miles per hour
calming
of traffic
visibility
of pedestrians
accident
of road

Jumbled Letter

Below is a jumbled letter about the *dangerous road* shown in the previous diagram. Insert each of the phrases on road safety, from the previous exercise, into the appropriate sentence.

Alternately, a _____ and railings to enclose nearby pavements would protect pedestrians and decrease the speed of car equally well

The _____ along South Street peaks between 8.00am and 9.00am, which, of course, coincides with the arrival of school children at St. Mary's Junior School on The Marsh.

In reality cars often drive along this road far too fast, at _____, in both directions.

I'm writing to draw your attention to a dangerous _____ on South Street near the junction with The Marsh (see diagram above) in Chip Town.

The _____ along South Street is a maximum of 30 miles per hour.

This whole area is most definitely a _____ to pedestrians.

To sum up, some sort of _____ scheme here is much needed and long overdue.

I must express my own, and other parents', anxiety at the daily sight of crowds of school children navigating the _____ with no protection.

Need I say that any _____, at this speed, involving pedestrians, adults or children, would be horrific and fatal.

These increase the _____ in the area, who also find the lack of traffic crossing facilities alarming.

The safety of Chip Town's children is at stake and depends upon your _____.

The situation is made more hazardous by _____, which can't cope with more than two abreast.

Other _____ include retirement flats and a gift shop.

To make matters even worse, a bend in the road causes _____ of oncoming traffic when crossing from east to west.

Language Analysis

- I. Regroup the jumbled sentences into the following topic categories in order to make a coherent letter of complaint to the Road and Safety Department of Chip Town Council about the 'trouble spot' on South Street.
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Volume of traffic
 - c. Speed of traffic
 - d. Other factors
 - e. Solution
- II. Underline all the phrases which describe place or direction in the letter.
- III. Draw an arrow on the diagram to illustrate the places and directions (from Step II).
- IV. The author of the letter is **dissatisfied** with the dangerous road, South Street. She thinks it is **obviously dangerous**. Circle all the phrases in the letter which express this **emotion** and **attitude** of the author.
- V. Discuss the effect on the reader of each phrase from Step IV with your partner. Does it:
 - a. emphasise a fact to the reader?
 - b. show that the point should be obvious to the reader?
 - c. express the author's dissatisfaction to the reader?

Mark the letter of the 'effect' next to each phrase from the letter: a, b or c.

Language Extension

The main purpose of a letter may be to communicate information to a reader. However, another important purpose of a letter may be to express the author's attitude or emotion on the subject to the reader.

I. Put the phrases below into categories, depending on what emotion or attitude they convey.

a) dissatisfaction	b) satisfaction	c) apology	d) annoyance	e) desires	f) gratitude
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I am particularly unhappy about...

I'm sorry to have to say...

I'm sorry that...

I'm very keen to...

Unfortunately, ...

I was delighted to see/hear that...

Thank you so much for...

Happily, ... Please accept my apologies for... Despite my request for...

...is not what I expected

What would suit me best is...

... was most impressive

Even though I previously mentioned...

II. Complete the possible sentences below from different letters by adding a phrase from above. More than one combination may work.

- a. The way she remembered all our names _____.
- b. _____ try your new software.
- c. _____ your colleague behaved abominably.
- d. _____ we arrived in time for dinner.
- e. _____ the flowers.
- f. The design _____.
- g. _____ the mess we made.
- h. _____ her disability, no ramp was available.
- i. _____ a lecture room with an OHP.
- j. _____ privacy, the papers got to hear about it.
- k. _____ we were too late.
- l. _____ you passed your driving test.
- m. _____ we didn't made the funeral.
- n. _____ the suggested colour scheme for the kitchen.

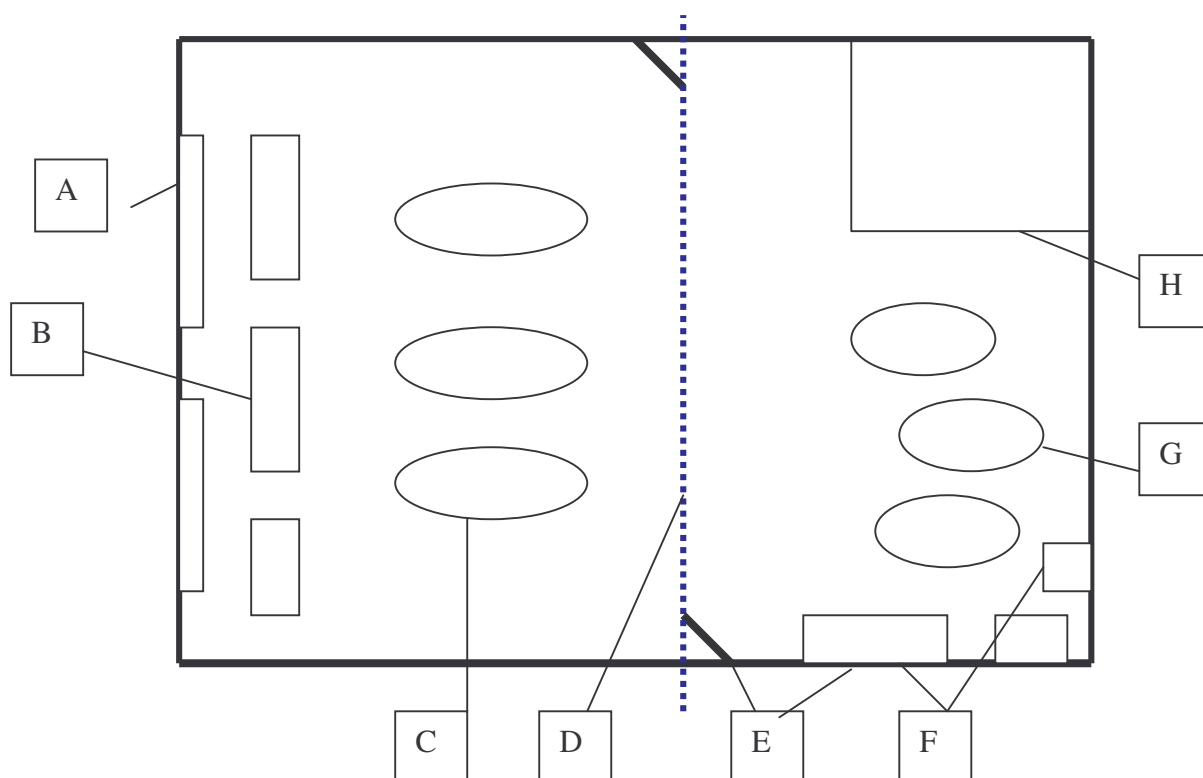
III. Choose three sentences and decide who wrote the letter to whom and about what.

Writing Practice

You are an office worker and below is a diagram of your office. There are a number of points that you are not happy about A-H, listed below.

Write a letter to your employer explaining what is unsatisfactory about the layout of your office and what you think should be done about it. You should:

- write an introduction
- group your point into topic categories
- describe the layout with accurate phrases of place and direction
- use phrases which express your dissatisfaction about the office layout
- suggest at least one possible solution



- A. Windows don't open – no ventilation
- B. Book shelves – cut out natural light
- C. Open plan desks – workers easily distracted
- D. Office used as a corridor
- E. Doors constantly opened and banged shut by through-traffic
- F. Photocopier, franking machine and colour printer – noisy and give off fumes
- G. Desks (your desk) too near coffee area – too noisy and smoky
- H. Coffee area – always messy

Answer Key

Diagram: Dangerous Road

traffic calming	swift action
speed limit	nearby amenities
flow of traffic	number of pedestrians
volume of traffic	narrow pavements
serious risk	poor visibility
stretch of road	zebra crossing
40 to 60 miles per hour	car accident

Jumbled Letter and Language Analysis

I'm writing to draw your attention to a dangerous stretch of road on South Street near the junction with The Marsh (see diagram above) in Chip Town. This whole area is most definitely a serious risk to pedestrians.

The volume of traffic along South Street peaks between 8.00am and 9.00am, which, of course, coincides with the arrival of school children at St. Mary's Junior School on The Marsh. I must express my own, and other parents', anxiety at the daily sight of crowds of school children navigating the flow of traffic with no protection.

The speed limit along South Street is a maximum of 30 miles per hour. In reality cars often drive along this road far too fast, at 40 to 60 miles per hour, in both directions. Need I say that any car accident, at this speed, involving pedestrians, adults or children, would be horrific and fatal. Other nearby amenities include retirement flats and a gift shop. These increase the number of pedestrians in the area, who also find the lack of traffic crossing facilities alarming. The situation is made more hazardous by narrow pavements, which can't cope with more than two abreast. To make matters even worse, a bend in the road causes poor visibility of oncoming traffic when crossing from east to west.

To sum up, some sort of traffic calming scheme here is much needed and long overdue. Alternately, a zebra crossing and railings to enclose nearby pavements would protect pedestrians and decrease the speed of cars equally well. The safety of Chip Town's children is at stake and depends upon your swift action.

Language Analysis (cont'd)

II. Underline all the phrases which describe place or direction in the letter.

on South Street near the junction
along South Street
on The Marsh
drive along
in both directions
nearby amenities
in the area
two abreast
a bend in the road
oncoming traffic
from east to west
nearby pavements

III. Draw an arrow on the diagram to illustrate the places and directions (from Step II).

- IV. The author of the letter is **dissatisfied** with the dangerous road, South Street. She thinks it is **obviously dangerous**. Circle all the phrases in the letter which express this **emotion** and **attitude** of the author.

I'm writing to draw your attention to (c)
is most definitely (c)
of course (b)
I must express my own, and other parents', anxiety at (c)
far too fast (a)
who also find the lack of traffic crossing facilities alarming (c)
To make matters even worse (c)
To reiterate (c)
is much needed (a)
long overdue (a)

Language extension

- II Complete the possible sentences below from different letters by adding a phrase from above. More than one combination may work.
- a. The way she remembered all our names **was most impressive** (B)
 - b. **I'm very keen to** try your new software. (E)
 - c. **I'm sorry to have to say** your colleague behaved abominably. (A)
 - d. **Happily,** we arrived in time for dinner. (B)
 - e. **Thank you so much for** the flowers. (F)
 - f. The design **is not what I expected.** (A)
 - g. **Please accept my apologies for** the mess we made. (C)
 - h. **Even though I previously mentioned** her disability, no ramp was available. (D)
 - i. **What would suit me best is** a lecture room with an OHP. (E)
 - j. **Despite my request for** privacy, the papers got to hear about it. (D)
 - k. **Unfortunately,** we were too late. (D)
 - l. **I was delighted to hear that** you passed your driving test. (B)
 - m. **I'm sorry that** we didn't make the funeral. (C)
 - n. **I am particularly unhappy about** the suggested colour scheme for the kitchen. (A)